

Questions and Answers On the French Crisis

By DAVID MASON

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PARIS (AP) — Here in question and answer form is an explanation of the French student-worker crisis, a period of turmoil Parisians are calling "The Days in May."

Q. When and how did it all start?

A. Student agitation on a small scale has been common in France since World War II. In recent years complaints have centered on jammed lecture rooms and lack of teachers. Last November, sociology students in the suburban Nanterre branch of the University of Paris struck for 10 days; protesting the slowness of promised reforms in teaching. They also complained that they were not being prepared for careers in the modern world and called for teacher-student committees to modernize education. Nanterre classes were suspended for two days in March, and on May 2 they were suspended again, the dean complaining that "certain groups of students were trying to create a climate of insecurity." On May 3, rioting broke out in Paris' Latin Quarter, with students taking part from Nanterre and the Sorbonne, the main university branch on the Left Bank. Disturbances continued almost every night, and on May 5 five rioters were jailed. This fired up the students, and police swarmed into the Latin Quarter, throwing tear gas and swinging their clubs. The Sorbonne was closed.

Q. What did the students do then?

A. Their long-range demands for educational reform were replaced by these immediate ones: Reopening of classes at Nanterre and the Sorbonne, withdrawal of police from the Latin Quarter, and freeing of jailed students and lifting of disciplinary action against others.

Q. At what point did things become really serious?

A. The night of May 10-11. Students built barricades in the streets, burned cars and tossed Molotov cocktails. The police retaliated with tear gas and concussion grenades. The toll: 367 persons injured, 468 arrests.

Q. What happened next?

A. Premier Georges Pompidou returned from a visit to Afghanistan May 11, promised to reopen the Sorbonne May 13, said the jailed students would be freed and promised renovation of the university system. He also called off the police.

Q. Was this enough to calm the students?

A. It made them more militant than ever, and the major unions called a one-day general strike for May 13 to protest police action against the students. During the strike several hundred thousand students and workers marched through the heart of Paris on one of the biggest parades in memory. The students and unions formed an uneasy alliance. Students occupied the Sorbonne and one of the state theaters, the Odeon, and set up a round-the-clock debating forum. The red flag of communism and the black banner of anarchy were flown.

Q. What was the government's response?

A. President Charles de Gaulle was on an official visit to Romania. Premier Pompidou told the National Assembly "our civilization... is at stake." He issued a communique saying the turbulent students would not "plunge the country into disorder." Then he went on the radio and television and promised that "all the legitimate demands" of the students would be met. He also hinted at steps to restore order, but none was taken.

Q. What were the unions and workers doing?

A. A grassroots strike movement began, with leaders saying that they had learned from the student disorders that only sharp, unlimited action would bring satisfaction for their demands for higher pay and other benefits. Union leaders began to cool toward the students since they had no control over them. The students continued to woo the workers and passed the hat for the strikers. The character of the "Days in May" now changed. The student turmoil stabilized, with sit-ins at most universities, nonstop debating in the Odeon and refusal to take examinations. But the labor strikes spread; about 6 million of France's 16 million were out Monday, and the strike wave was still spreading.

Q. What do the workers want?

A. What they have been want-

ing for years—more money, shorter working hours, job security.

Q. Haven't their demands been met?

A. The government, which runs such major sectors of French industry such as rail and air transport, communications and the like, has been granting regular raises of a few per cent a year. Private industry has also come through. But the workers have never been satisfied and have frequently struck for one or two days to push their demands. The government has been able until now to keep the lid on. Recently, however, unemployment began to increase, reaching upwards of half a million. Job security became a big issue. Adaptation to the competition created by the Common Market means the end of marginal industries and more mechanized factories, with fewer workers.

Q. What steps are the politicians taking?

A. The Leftist Federation led by Francois Mitterrand and the Communist party smell blood. They introduced a censure motion in the National Assembly, and the vote will come Wednesday night or early Thursday. Small cracks are appearing in the Gaullist bloc, which is two seats short of a majority in Parliament but has squeaked through on previous censure votes because Centrists went

Extra Time Given To Fuel Dealers In Stricken Area

DES MOINES — (AP) — Motor vehicle fuel dealers in tornado-stricken areas of Iowa will be given an additional month to file their fuel tax returns for April, State Treasurer Paul Franzburg said Tuesday.

Franzburg said the April returns, normally due by May 30, may be delayed as late as June 30 in the Charles City, Oelwein and Maynard areas affected by last Wednesday's tornadoes.

In a letter to licensees, Franzburg said, "I am sure that either directly or indirectly these tornadoes have affected the normal procedures in your business."

Georgia, not California touched off the first United States gold rush in 1828, the National Geographic Society says.

along with the government. This time it may be different.

Q. Is De Gaulle himself in danger?

A. If the censure motion passes, only Pompidou and his cabinet will be out. De Gaulle is serving a seven-year term, which ends in 1972.

Q. What will De Gaulle do if Pompidou's government is thrown out?

A. He will address the nation on Friday and until then it's anyone's guess.

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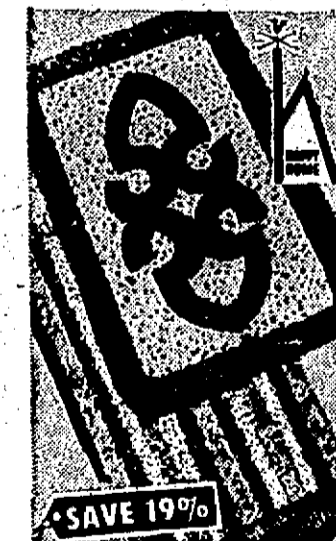
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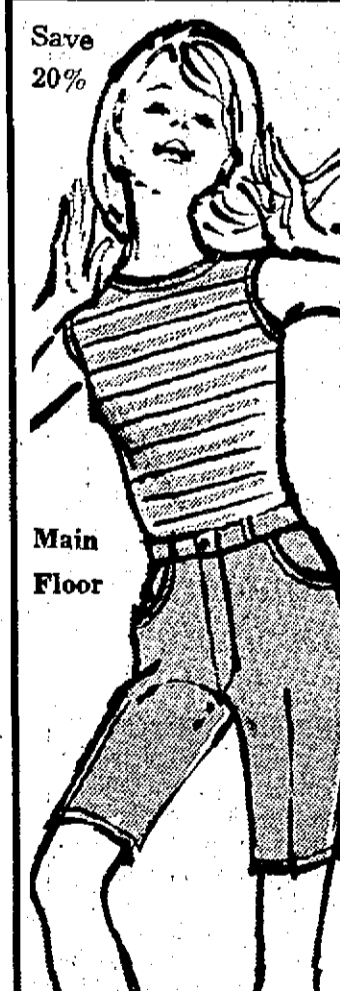
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